

“Raising My Awareness”

All my life I had been healthy, thin and quite the exerciser. Suddenly things started to change. I began to experience symptoms which were never specifically diagnosed. The only thing they were definite about is that I had some kind of autoimmune thing going on. During the course of it all I was on several different steroids and I gained weight. I never changed my eating habits but I was unable to exercise anymore. For many years, 15 to be exact, I remained overweight even though I was taking no medications. Last year my doctor told me that my blood pressure was slowly going up each time I had an appointment. He said you know you don't like taking medications so I would advise you to lose 10% percent of your weight and it will go down.

I knew I was overweight and wanted to lose but I really didn't know how to start. He told me to record everything I eat for two weeks and come back. I did that and he couldn't believe what I was eating. I was hardly eating anything. I was eating healthy food but not a healthy balance. He suggested that I go into a weight program.

I joined a program in May of 2007 and followed their program without using their products. My goal was to lose 70 lbs. I began to eat soooo much more! My co-workers would look in amazement at the amounts of food I was eating. They couldn't believe I was eating all that food and losing weight.



What the program helped me to do is to **watch my portion sizes**. I love fruits and vegetables so I have a tendency to over eat. I didn't eat starches a lot and now I have three portions everyday. What I realized is that everything we learned in elementary school. You know, the food pyramid www.mypyramid.gov/ really works! **I had to go back to the basics**. Now I eat 4-6 ounces of protein per meal, 3 servings of fruit a day, 4 servings of vegetables, 1 dairy, 3 or 4 starches, and at least 64 oz of water.



I can't forget **exercise is important too**. I continue to walk on breaks and in the evenings. I also re-activated my gym membership.

My blood pressure went down before I lost 10% of my weight. I reached my goal in February 2008. I had never thought about a clothes size. I was focused on the weight. **I went from an 18/20 to a size 10 and lost 73 lbs. My energy level has increased. I have walked up to 14 miles at a fast pace without tiring or realizing I had walked that far.**



I am giving all praises to God for good health. I am not always to the letter...I still enjoy ice cream, chips, or other treats once in a while, but the program has raised an awareness and I am really conscious about my eating habits and physical activity. I find what works for me is being persistent and consistent, and remembering nothing comes without work."

Submitted by Audra Randle, MDCH